



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029**

JAN 22 2013

Henry Kay
Maryland Transit Administration
100 South Charles Street
Tower 2, Suite 700
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Re: Red Line Corridor Transit Study, Final Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Draft Evaluation, Baltimore, Maryland, December 2012, CEQ # 20120386

Dear Mr. Kay,

In accordance with Section 102(2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2) (C), Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7609, and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the above referenced project. The FEIS was prepared by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and is dated December 2012. EPA reviewed the September 2008 Draft EIS, and submitted a comment letter dated January 5, 2009. In this letter EPA rated the DEIS as "LO" (Lack of Objections), according to the EPA rating system described on the website www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/comments/ratings.html.

The FEIS analyzes two alternatives, including the no build alternative and the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative involves the construction and operation of a new light rail transit corridor over 14.1 miles from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in Baltimore County to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center campus in Baltimore City. Adverse environmental impacts to ecological resources are generally minor. Stream impacts are approximately 2,265 linear feet, wetland impacts of 1.22 acres, and forest impacts of approximately 34 acres. EPA recognizes that updated and detailed analysis on aquatic resources has been completed since the Draft EIS and that the FEIS shows increases in potential impacts to aquatic resources above what was reported in the DEIS. Additional avoidance and minimization techniques should be incorporated where practicable, and appropriate mitigation developed, as the project moves forward.

EPA appreciates that comments made on the DEIS were fully considered, and that appropriate changes and modifications were made to the FEIS based on agency and public comments. EPA also would like to acknowledge the comprehensive coordination efforts made to keep resource agencies informed and up-to-date on project impacts, conceptual mitigation, and

document development. We feel that these efforts have resulted in a positive and transparent decision making process and environmental outcome. Additionally, EPA would also like to recognize the thorough and sound Environmental Justice analysis, as well as the meaningful community engagement, completed for the EIS.

Thank you for providing EPA the opportunity to review the Red Line Project FEIS. EPA looks forward to working with FTA and Maryland Transit Administration as the project moves forward. If you have any questions regarding these comments, the staff contact for this project is Ms. Alaina McCurdy; she can be reached at 215-814-2741.

Sincerely,



Barbara Rudnick
NEPA Team Leader
Office of Environmental Programs